

### **III. Existing Conditions**

The purpose of this section is to document the existing conditions of the study area, including a review of other planning documents associated with this area of the county demographics, land use patterns, transportation networks, housing, crime, community facilities, parks and open space and undeveloped land. The existing conditions analysis is intended to provide a snapshot of what the Powers Ferry corridor is today. Data collected from a variety of sources provides the foundation and illustrates the point from which our planning efforts begin.

In the early 1970's the Powers Ferry corridor was still forest and agricultural fields with sporadic development. What little was built during this time was concentrated mostly along or near access points to Interstate 75 and 285. Apartments, hotel/motels and some office uses were just starting to urbanize this region of Cobb County due to the recently built interstate system and Brumby Elementary School. Despite the growth along the freeway system, development for the most part, had not infiltrated the forest, open agricultural fields and farm houses that still existed along Powers Ferry Road. Ironically, during the early 70's Cobb County adopted its first Zoning Ordinance as a response to the expected growth for the foreseeable future.

Fast forward to almost 40 years and other than a few parcels, the Powers Ferry corridor is completely built out. As part of an exurban community that was once rural then suburban, this region has now been encompassed by progress due in large part by an explosive growth spurt during the 1980's and 1990's. The Powers Ferry corridor is part of one of the top job centers in metro Atlanta, which is home to several national and international business headquarters.



### III.A Previous Planning Studies & Peer Community Review

Different sections of the Powers Ferry Master Plan have been the subject of numerous planning studies over the last 10 years. In addition to the County's overall 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), most of the sub-area plans were conducted by the Cumberland CID and concentrated in the southern tier of the study boundary. The northern part of the study area has garnered less attention but was incorporated into planning initiatives conducted in a joint effort by the City of Marietta and Cobb County. The purpose of this master planning effort is not to replicate prior studies, but to instead build upon them and provide the community with a policy manual to guide future development and redevelopment within the Powers Ferry corridor.

#### Previous Planning Studies

These earlier studies have provided important insights into the desires of the community and have influenced planning recommendations within this Master Plan. These studies and reports include the following:

#### Comprehensive Plans

##### *Cobb County 2030 Comprehensive Plan*

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that assists decision-making and administrative actions in an effort to guide Cobb County as whole towards the community's preferred future. It includes Character Areas, Future Land Use Map, Policies and an Implementation Program to achieve the goals.

The Character Areas and Future Land Use Map will be mentioned later in this document. The Policies provide the framework for moving the County into the next 30 years. There are multiple policies identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan that are essential to the development of this plan. Below are just a few that are highlighted.



Policy 1.2 - Increase the economic vitality of underserved areas through programs and incentives

Policy 1.17 – Identify blighted and deteriorating neighborhoods and promote the revitalization and/or redevelopment of these areas.

Policy 1.18 – Promote smart growth policies and encourage the creative design of residential developments that meet the needs of the human and natural environment.

Policy 2.3 - Encourage adequate amounts, types, and densities of housing needed to support desired commercial and industrial growth.

Policy 2.14 - Promote the construction of mixed-use developments in appropriate areas.

Policy 2.15 – Promote the creation of community gathering spaces.

Policy 3.1 - Work with various organizations to market Cobb County's strengths and its quality of life, in order to attract new businesses and retain existing businesses.

Policy 4.6 - Promote revitalization or redevelopment of declining residential areas through economic incentives, code changes, and/or land use changes.

Policy 4.11 - Collaborate with the Cobb County Schools to improve non-vehicular travel in areas surrounding schools.

Policy 4.14 - Sustain partnerships between local school system administrative staffs and county staff regarding education and population growth issues.

Policy 6.6 - Encourage the development of multi-use greenways in flood plains and easements to allow for the maintenance of natural open space while accommodating citizens needs for passive recreation opportunities, bicycle networks, and public access to lakes and streams for low intensity recreation.

Policy 7.6 - Promote transportation alternatives such as transit, bicycle facilities, pedestrian infrastructure, car pooling, and other forms of alternative modes of travel.

Policy 7.10 – Promote land use transportation linkages to ensure an adequate transportation system for anticipated future populations and their corresponding travel behaviors.

Policy 9.6 - Promote home ownership initiatives as a means to build community support, pride, and expand housing choices for individuals.

Policy 10.1 - Encourage diverse citizen participation in transportation and land use planning processes.

### *Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)*

The CTP serves as the strategy for transportation investments over the next 25 years. It is a long-range, comprehensive plan that is multimodal in nature and integrally linked to the land use plan developed by the County and its incorporated neighbors. The CTP includes recommended projects and policies for the entire County to be implemented over the lifetime of the CTP. The Programmed and Recommendation improvements below pertain to projects listed within the Powers Ferry Study area.

#### Recommended from CTP

##### **Roadway Capacity Improvements**

Delk Road – Cobb Parkway to Powers Ferry Road – Widen to 6 – 8 lanes.

##### **Transit**

Circulator shuttles in Cumberland/Galleria

##### **Multi Use Trails**

Rottenwood Creek Trail – Bob Callan Trail Phase II

#### Programmed from CTP

##### **Roadway Capacity Improvements**

Delk Road – I-75 to Powers Ferry Road – Widen 6 lane divided

Powers Ferry Road – Delk Road to Terrell Mill Road – Widen 6 lane divided

Leland Drive Extension – Northern terminus to Terrell Mill Road – New 2 lane roadway

##### **Operational Intersection Improvements**

Windy Hill Road at I-75 – Congestion relief intersection improvements

Windy Hill Road (EB) at Powers Ferry Road (NB) – Congestion relief

#### Sub-Area Plans

##### *Franklin/Delk Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study and 5 year update*

The Delk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) LCI study was a joint planning collaboration between the City of Marietta and Cobb County that was approved in early 2005. The purpose for the study was to determine if the previously proposed I-75 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station that was planned for the Delk Road area can stimulate revitalization surrounding the station. Since the study was approved, the proposed BRT transit system plans have been shelved indefinitely, because it was never approved by the Federal Transit Authority due to differences in data results, and have substantially altered the initial goals and objectives of the original plan. Consequently, the City of Marietta has completed a 5 year update to the plan that is now known as the Franklin/Delk LCI Study, thus repositioning and revising the vision, goals and initiatives for the community. This revision removes the redevelopment focus of the BRT line and develops scenarios based upon recruitment of green technology industries. The Powers Ferry Master Plan will serve as the update and re-imagination for the unincorporated portion of the Franklin/Delk LCI.



Below are new local initiatives that are listed in the LCI study as under development.

Global Green Technology Corridor – Is an innovative effort utilizing renewable energy technologies to revitalize the Franklin Road corridor by taking advantage of existing businesses and higher learning institutions in the area. This serves as a focal point of the Marietta portion of the updated Franklin/Delk LCI.

Opportunity Zones – Is a Job Tax Credit initiative offered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to Local Governments which undertake redevelopment and revitalization efforts that are in decline, suffer from disinvestment and are in need of redevelopment and revitalization. To be eligible for the tax credit program, the Opportunity Zone must be contained within block groups with a poverty rate of 15% or block groups that are adjacent to block groups with a poverty rate of 15% or greater.

If areas meet criteria for designation they will qualify for the following incentives: Maximum state Job Tax Credit of \$3,500 per newly created job, the lowest job creation threshold (2 jobs) of any tax credit program, and the use of Job Tax Credit against 100% of income tax liability and payroll withholding.

New Market Tax Credits (NMTC)– The purpose of the program is to increase investment capital available to business and economic development programs in low-income communities and areas that have poor access to debt and equity capital. Each year, the NMTC program offers a seven-year, 39 percent federal tax credit for Qualified Equity Investments (QEI) made through investment vehicles known as Community Development Entities (CDE).

Other Transportation initiatives within the Franklin/Delk LCI pertinent to the Powers Ferry Master Plan are listed below:

Delk Road Medians: from I-75 to Powers Ferry Road

Rottenwood Creek Multi-use Trail Phase 1: from Terrell Mill to I-75

Powers Ferry Road Multi-use Trail: from South Marietta Parkway (SR 120) to Terrell Mill Road

Delk Road at Powers Ferry Road Pedestrian Signal Upgrades

Delk Road at Powers Ferry Road intersection improvements

### *Northeast Corridor Transportation Plan*

The Northeast Corridor Transportation Master Plan was an action plan that comprehensively addressed commercial and residential mobility and accessibility needs within the northeast corridor of the Cumberland CID. The following recommendations are included below:

#### **Land Use**

The plan recommends transit-based town center type areas along Powers Ferry Road, including Powers Ferry Road at Terrell Mill Road, with an emphasis on a concentration of commercial uses in a well-defined area at the core, mixing uses within a single site and building, reducing building setbacks, concealing surface parking, providing on-street parking and improving pedestrian connections.

New redevelopment efforts should focus on the older, multi-family residential uses and include a mix of owner and rental units for the older apartment complexes.

Conversion of commercial property to residential is the recommended scenario for the commercial uses on the east side of Powers Ferry, south of Windy Hill Road.

Small Lot Single-Family housing is recommended, specifically within portions of Wildwood.

Transfer of Development Rights was mentioned in the Northeast Corridor Transportation Plan as way to preserve open space and promote higher densities in desirable locations within the CID

#### **Transportation**

##### High-priority projects

Terrell Mill realignment at Delk Road

Terrell Mill Road at Paper Mill Road intersection improvements

Terrell Mill Road at Lower Roswell Road intersection improvements

Lower Roswell Road at Old Canton Road

##### Short-term projects

Powers Ferry Road at Delk Road intersection improvements

Powers Ferry Road at Interstate North Parkway

##### Long-term projects

Powers Ferry Road improvements from Terrell Mill Road to Delk Road

Grade separation at Wildwood Parkway to the I-75 interchange with Windy Hill Road (to be planned as part of the Windy Hill Road at I-75 interchange improvement project)

### *Blueprint Cumberland Strategic Plan*

The Blueprint Cumberland Strategic Plan, more commonly known as Blueprint Cumberland, is a Cumberland LCI Plan sponsored by The Atlanta Regional Commission, The Cumberland Community Improvement District (CID) and the Cumberland Transportation Network (CTN). Blueprint Cumberland provides a framework and roadmap for urbanizing the core of the Cumberland area into a more livable, walkable, sustainable and aesthetically pleasing environment and includes urban design standards and streetscape options.

The primary focus of the plan is concentrated in the core of the CID. However, parts of the CID that stretch up and into the Powers Ferry Corridor are represented within the Blueprint Cumberland Study Area. The study area is the subject of detailed recommendations for future land use and possible rezoning recommendations through the Supplemental Housing Study conducted in 2003.

Through the Supplemental Housing Study, development opportunities and design standards were set to help create a better balance between jobs and housing, and shift the focus to allowing redevelopment of rental apartments to a mix of for-sale and rental housing.

### *Blueprint Cumberland II*

Blueprint Cumberland II is an extension of the Blueprint Cumberland Strategic Plan in 2001 and the Supplemental Housing Study conducted in 2003. The intent of Blueprint Cumberland II is to update the original plan and formulate new goals based on current conditions and market trends and develop a strategic plan to address the reformulated goals.

Due to the diverse geographic area within the Blueprint II planning boundaries, the area was separated into “Areas of Influence” and the “Core Area”. The envisioned heart of the CCID is the “Core Area”, which is the subject of detailed analysis and is influenced the most by the plans recommendations. The “Core Area” does not extend into the Powers Ferry Master Plan study boundary. As way to provide a voice for adjacent stakeholders that will be affected by the plan the most an “Area of Influence” was established. This area represents the broadest geographic area of the study and overlaps the southern portion of the Powers Ferry Master Plan study area south of Windy Hill Road.

After conceptualizing three master plan scenarios a recommended Master Plan, concentrated within the Core Area of the Plan, was developed. Some of the key recommendations from the Blueprint Cumberland II plan include:

Focal Point within Core Area

Mixed-Use districts throughout sub-areas as defined by the plan

Additional vehicular and pedestrian connections within the area

Offer other transportation choices and incorporate traffic initiatives to provide a safer pedestrian environment (i.e. traffic calming measures, landscaped medians, paved intersections and improved crosswalks)

Other key recommendations from the plan that represent issues that will remain a continued concern to the CCID include:

Expanding Blueprint Cumberland II to cover area outside of the Core Area and within the CCID boundaries

A joint planning study with the City of Sandy Springs and the Fulton Perimeter CID, as an expansion of Blueprint Cumberland II, to determine the long-term transportation needs

To facilitate greater mobility for pedestrians, create a Pedestrian Mobility Action Plan

Establishing a physical identity for the Cumberland/Galleria community

As large parcels are redeveloped, promote the creation of street grids for improved mobility

Create transit service within CCID

Promote development and redevelopment of mixed-use and residential housing to improve the jobs-to-housing balance

#### *Powers Ferry Road / Windy Hill Road Streetscape Improvements*

The Cumberland Community Improvement District, with assistance from a consultant service has initiated a formulation of design and construction drawing project for Powers Ferry Road and the Windy Hill Road Corridor. The project scope includes streetscape design elements along Powers Ferry Road from Windy Ridge Parkway to Terrell Mill Road and along Windy Hill Road from Spectrum Circle/Interstate North Parkway to Powers Ferry Road. Streetscape elements to be designed and engineered are as follows:

Corner treatments with ADA ramps and stamped crosswalks provided at 4 intersections.

Decorative Mast Arm Traffic Signals at all intersections per CCID standard

Upgrade up to 125' of concrete median to be planted with street trees (South of Balearic Drive).

Upgrade up to two concrete pedestrian refuge islands to be planted (at Terrell Mill and at Windy Hill)

Street lighting at 225' on center with pedestrian lighting at 75' on center where possible using the selected CCID standard

Street trees at 50' on center, where possible, along both sides of the corridor.

Street furniture at appropriate locations per CCID standard

### **Peer Communities Review**

As part of the process of developing the Powers Ferry Master Plan, Community Development Planning Division staff reviewed planning documents from local, regional, and national communities, which are similar in nature to the Powers Ferry area and area facing similar issues. The purpose of these “peer community” reviews is to determine the most successful and least successful tools that can be used to assist with redevelopment. The three communities chosen for review include: the Perimeter CID in metropolitan Atlanta, Tysons Corner in Fairfax County, VA (in suburban Washington DC); and the City of Fort Lauderdale, FL (in the Miami metropolitan area).

### **Perimeter CID**

The Perimeter CID in Fulton and DeKalb County, GA is a successful satellite city much like the Cumberland CID. This area is a regional employment, retail, and service hub with a high concentration of professional office and medical uses. The area has high density residential uses at the core of the community that transitions to lower density residential communities such as Dunwoody and Sandy Springs at the periphery. One of the major differences between the areas is the presence of MARTA transit system which provides heavy rail mass transportation solutions to connect the Perimeter area with Buckhead, Midtown, and Downtown Atlanta. Another major difference is in funding. The Perimeter CID, much like the Cumberland CID can leverage funds to assist with the implementation of transportation alternatives and solutions to assist the area's growth. These funds will not be able to be leveraged in the Powers Ferry area that is out of the CID boundary.

The Perimeter CID is a good example to use because they have recently updated their LCI study which will provide a reliable resource for determining successful tools that they have implemented to assist in creating change in this area. Some of the successful solutions dealing with the core area and the transitions areas are as follows:



- Shuttle circulator service for residents, shoppers, and employers in the area to connect MARTA rail station with surrounding uses;
- Streetscape Improvements along major corridors;
- Intersection improvements to improve traffic mobility;
- Flyover bridge to assist with north-south connectivity;
- Creating new streets to formulate a grid system as part of the redevelopment of large parcels;
- Pedestrian connections at the Perimeter Mall;
- Sidewalk installations;
- On street bike lanes;
- Off street bicycle & pedestrian facilities;
- Open space protection and new park creation; and
- Zoning Overlay District between Fulton and DeKalb County to merge development opportunities and create the same rules regardless of jurisdiction.

### **Tysons Corner**

Tysons Corner is very similar to the Cumberland Area in that represents a shift in growth patterns over the last forty years that saw a shift from the traditional downtown expansion growth model of office and retail into more of the satellite city model. Many of these satellite cities were created at major transportation crossroads that supplied large volumes of traffic and provided convenient locations for new commercial ventures. These satellite cities are now maturing and are becoming more and more urban over time. They bring an urban environment out to their suburban area taking on more of the personality of their metropolitan hubs. Like the Perimeter CID, Tysons Corner is connected to regional rail mass transit, which assists with connecting it to the workforce and activity centers of the larger Washington DC region. Also, Tysons Corner, much like the Cumberland and Perimeter CIDs, can leverage funds to assist with the implementation of transportation alternatives and solutions to assist the area's growth. These funds will not be able to be leveraged in the Powers Ferry area that is out of the CID boundary.

The Tysons Corner Plan "Transforming Tysons" is a master planning document that provides for more urban type development around its four rail transit stops with a transitioning of land uses and transportation options around its periphery. Some of the recommendations from these transition areas include the following:

- Additional public facilities to meet the needs of the growing residential community;
- Increased FAR for transitioning/underutilized retail areas with additional height limitations to provide the scale necessary for redevelopment without negatively impacting surrounding residential property owners;
- Circulator service to provide another form of transportation alternatives;

- Leverage redevelopment of properties to secure ROW for transportation improvements when increased density or FAR is allowed;
- Encourage parcel consolidation as part of redevelopment to assist in improving transportation mobility while increasing intensity;
- Increased density at existing deteriorating apartment communities by increasing densities from 8-12 units per acre to 20-30 units per acre;
- Protect neighboring stable residential uses through the use of screening, landscape buffers, improved building design, noise attenuation, and building height transitions;
- Development of a Building Height Concept scenario that provides recommendations on building heights in different areas of Tysons Corner;
- Development of a Tiered Intensity Concept that provides recommendations on FAR in different areas of Tysons Corner;
- Development of street type guidelines depending on the type of street and function of the street;
- Develop a Zoning Overlay District that is distinct to Tysons Corner;
- Develop urban development, infrastructure, and standards to assist in building an urban environment that is different from the general suburban standards required in other areas of Fairfax County while also balancing the needs of transit, walking, bikes, and cars;
- Create design guidelines that recognize the difference of each district within Tysons Corner so that it does not become homogenous through the use of Character Zones; and
- Requirement for transportation studies with all new developments to assist in improving mobility in the corridor.

### **City of Fort Lauderdale, FL**

The City of Fort Lauderdale, FL is a urban/suburban area in metropolitan Miami. They have recently conducted a Urban Design Plan for North US 1. The plan was created due to the changing nature of the corridor from a suburban commercial oriented high-speed arterial to an urban street with a mixture of uses that needs to meet the needs of a variety of functions. The plan separates the roadway into a variety of nodal points and determines the appropriate building threshold for each of the sub-markets. It then established circulation patterns, site standards, character areas, design guidelines, and develops an implementation plan to bring it all to fruition. The implementation plan contains the following:

- Adopt new zoning code to enforce design guidelines;
- Adjust zoning code and comprehensive plan to add additional commercial depth to commercial corridors to assist with redevelopment;
- Develop improved transit options;
- Increase pedestrian infrastructure and expand right-of-way;

- Define signage, landscaping, and architectural requirements for character areas;
- Develop specific plans for unique sites or intersections;
- Develop on-site cross access easements;
- Consider a Interdistrict Corridor Maintenance Program; and
- Develop tax incentives for improvements on existing properties.

### **III.B Demographics**

#### Population

Population estimates as well as projections were collected over a 3 mile radius from the intersection of Terrell Mill Road and Powers Ferry Road. The 3 mile radius includes the entire study area and roughly a mile outside the study area. Parts of the containment area include Fulton County and the City of Atlanta.

Claritas, a market research firm, provided the population figures and shows that according to the 1990 Census there were 63,460 people inside the 3 mile ring. By 2000 the population had grown to 74,355 and in 2009 it is estimated that 75,646 people reside in the area. Over the next 5 years to 2014, according to Claritas the population will grow to 77,701.

<b>Population</b>	<b>0-3 miles</b>
1990	63,460
2000	74,355
2009 Estimate	75,646
2014 Projection	77,701

**Figure 6**

Most of the growth inside the 3 mile radius occurred between 1990 and 2000. The population during that 10 year span grew by 17%. However, in almost the same time frame from 2000 to 2009 the population growth slowed to only 1.74%. Over the next 5 years growth within the Powers Ferry corridor area is expected to eclipse the last 9 years with a projected growth of 2.72%.

<b>Population Growth</b>	<b>0-3 miles</b>
Growth 1990-2000	2.72%
Estimated Growth 2000-2009	1.74%
Projected Growth 2009-2014	2.72%

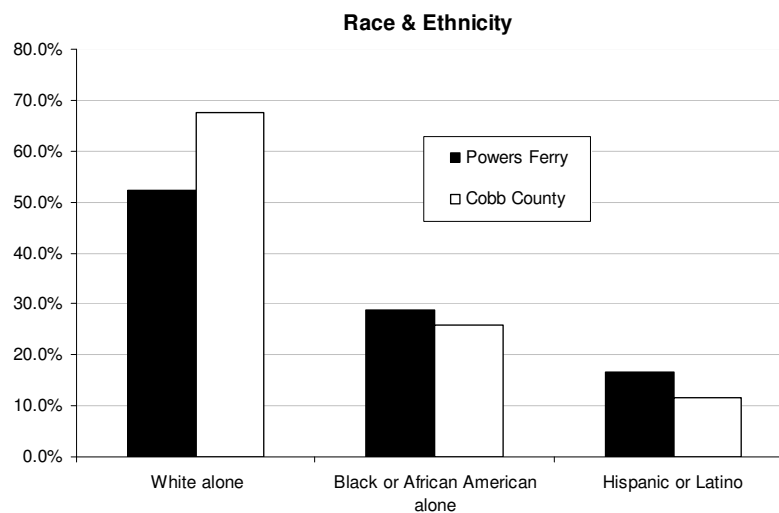
**Figure 7**

#### Race & Ethnicity

The Powers Ferry Road community has been known to be one of the more diverse areas of Cobb County. Based on the 2009 estimates from Claritas, the race make up of the Powers Ferry area, when compared to Cobb County, shows the diversity of the region.

The majority of the demographic study area population is 52% white compared to the county's 68% of the same race. Blacks or African Americans make up 29% of the population, while they only represent 26% of the county. The most significant finding was the 16.6 % Latino within the 3 mile radius compared to the county's 12%. The fact that there are fewer whites and more minority groups representing the population shows there is a level of multiculturalism going on within the area.

A large part of the Latino community in the Powers Ferry area is Brazilian. According to the Global Atlanta Snapshots publication put out by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Cobb County is home to the largest population of Brazilians, with 1,813 (2000 Census Data on Foreign-Born Population by Region, Country or Area of Birth). Of the 1,813 the majority reside in census tracts 304.06, 304.05 and 303.21, which overlaps the Powers Ferry Study Area.



**Figure 8**

### Age

One of the more important dimensions of the population as it relates to servicing needs of the community is age of the population. **Figure 9** breaks down the population by age groups and shows that the majority are in the prime of their life between 25 and 45 years of age. When compared to the county, the Powers Ferry area has a much larger share of a younger population, with fewer children and less “baby boomers” and elderly. This can be partly contribute to the the area’s location within a more urban environment, which is a more desirable development pattern for younger individuals.

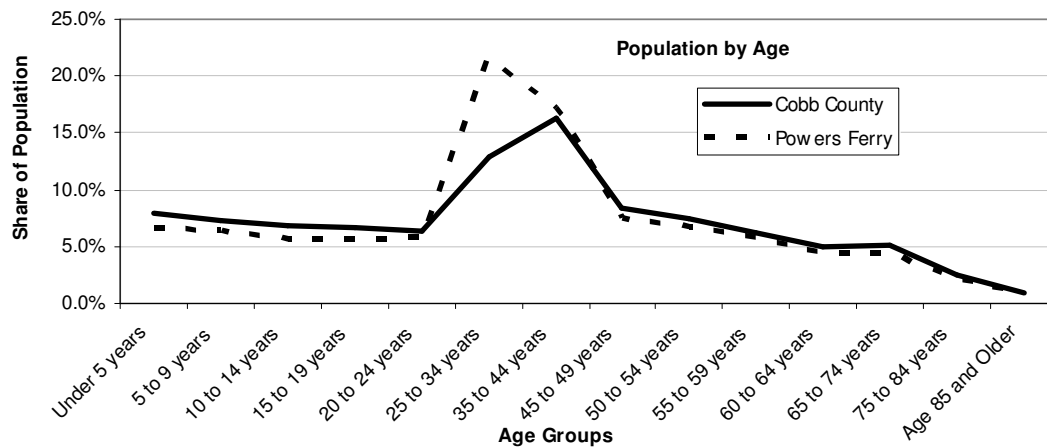


Figure 9

### III.C Land Use

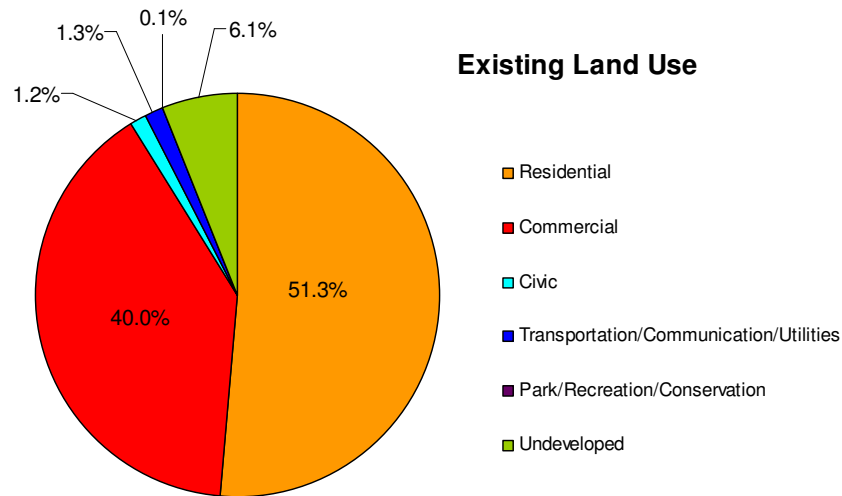
#### Character Areas

The Powers Ferry study area contains really three distinct character areas according to the Character Area Map within the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Most of the northwestern part of the study area is considered Suburban Residential due to the mostly residential uses in the area. The commercial activity node along Powers Ferry between Delk Road and Wildwood Parkway has been identified as a corridor character because of the “strip” nature of the commercial activity. Approximately three quarters of the southern part of the study area is considered Urban Center on the Character Area map. These areas contain a concentration of high intensity office and commercial uses.

#### Existing Land Use

According to **Figure 10**, just over half of the existing land use (51.3%) is residential and can be found almost exclusively within the northern two thirds of the study area. The most prevalent type of residential is multi-family followed by attached townhome communities and a very small area of single family detached housing. The 2<sup>nd</sup> most dominant use is commercial which makes up 40% of the existing uses. Most of the commercial can be found in the southern portion of the study area and along both sides of Powers Ferry Road. The most common type of commercial is office which is concentrated mostly south of Windy Hill Road between Powers Ferry and I-75. Retail is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most dominant type of existing commercial use and makes up most of the uses along both sides of Powers Ferry Road. Some less frequent uses are civic/government institutions or utility uses. There are still pockets of undeveloped lands, primarily in the southern section of the corridor, with the exception of a large contiguous area of county owned open space adjacent to I-75 on the south side of Terrell Mill Road.





**Figure 10**

### Future Land Use

The 2030 Cobb County Comprehensive Plan is a general guide and policy document that includes desired future land uses to assist planning decisions within the community. The future land use section of the comprehensive plan defines a broad spectrum of future uses and includes guidelines and allowable zonings within each Future Land Use designation.

The most prevalent future land use in the corridor is the Regional Activity Center (RAC), which makes up most of the southern half of the entire study area, according to **Figure 11**. The purpose of the Regional Activity Center is to provide for areas that can support a high intensity of development, which serves a regional market. Typical uses include high rise offices, urban commercial and dense residential development, all of which can currently be found within this area of Cobb County.

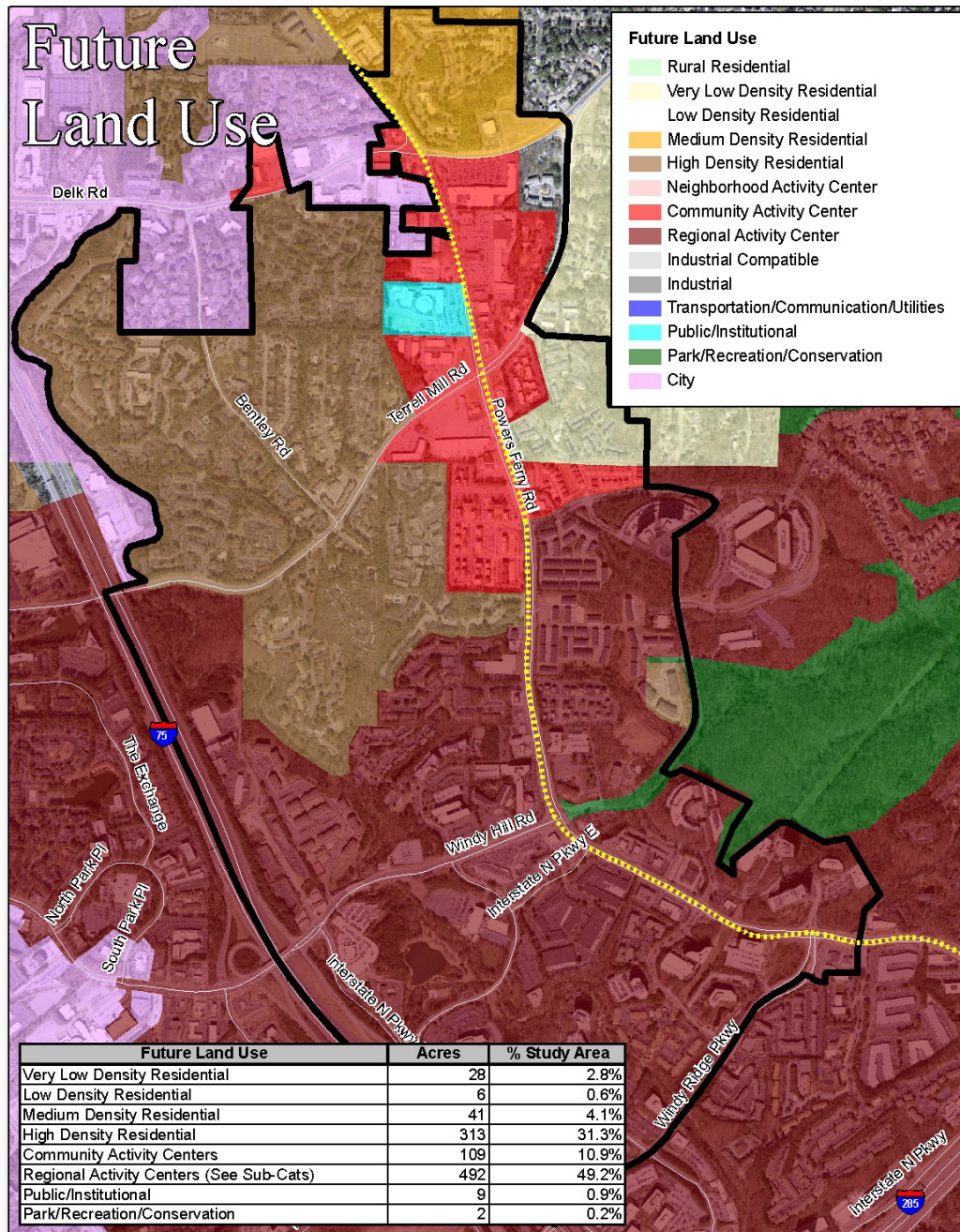


Figure 11



In 1994 the Board adopted Sub-area classifications to the RAC (**Figure 12**) with the intent to optimize the use of land and encourage development in the most appropriate locations, which were determined by several factors, such as carrying capacity, access considerations, compatibility with adjacent uses and suitability to scale and market potential. The sub area classifications are intentionally broad to provide flexibility for growth within the RAC.

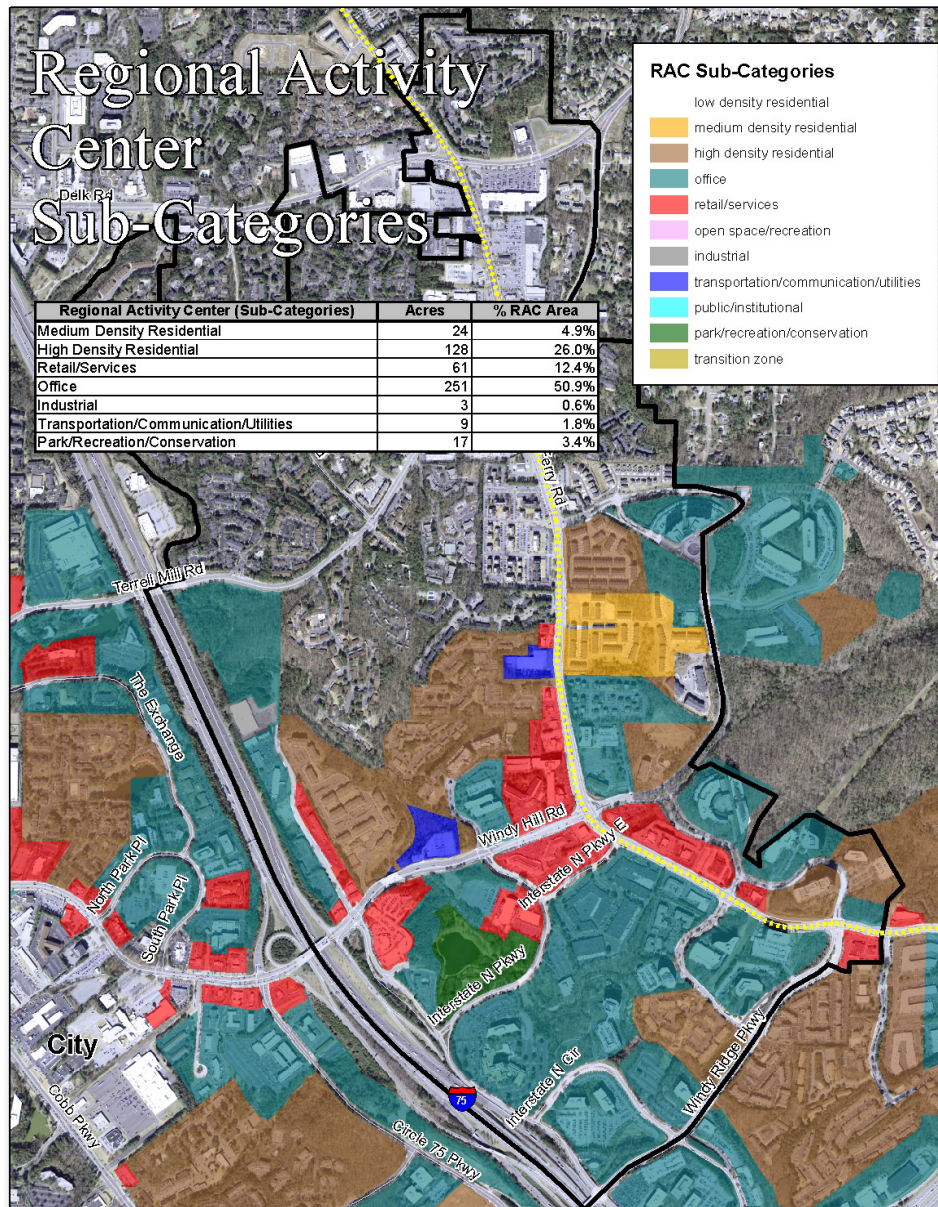


Figure 12

The next most notable future use is High Density Residential (HDR). Approximately 31% of the future land uses within the study boundary is marked for a higher dense housing product. Along Bentley Road north of Terrell Mill Road and south of Delk Road contains the highest concentration of HDR properties, which provides for residential uses between 5 and 12 units per acre.

Community Activity Center (CAC), which stretches along Powers Ferry Road on both sides of the roadway and along Windy Hill Road, makes up about 11% of the future land use in the Powers Ferry community. The CAC provides for areas that can meet the needs of several neighborhoods or communities. It is less intense than the RAC and does not include the sub-categories or the flexibility of the RAC. Some of the typical land uses suggested within the CAC include low to medium intensity office, retail and commercial services. There is a limit to building heights and, the floor area ratios for both office and retail are significantly less than the RAC.

Some of the other less frequent future use designations but just as important is Medium Density Residential (MDR), which can be found at the northeast corner of Delk Road and Powers Ferry Road. The Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) designation on the east side of Powers Ferry road between Terrell Mill and Wildwood Parkway is an unusual future land use category within such an urban environment. A small pocket of Low Density Residential (LDR) can be found on the corner of Delk Road and Terrell Mill Road and Public Institutional (PI) which provides for government and institutional uses, can be found at the current location of Brumby Elementary.

One of the more important quality of life designations is the Park/Recreation/Conservation (PRC) future use. There is only 2 acres within our study area designated for PRC. However, just outside the boundaries of the study area, is the Chattahoochee National Park (CNRA), which is a federally owned recreational area containing approximately 850 acres of natural greenspace, walking and bike trails, fishing spots, picnic areas and rafting opportunities. The CNRA is a regional draw and provides sufficient park and natural area to accommodate existing and future population growth in this area of the County.

### Zoning

While the 2030 Comprehensive Plan is a general policy document, the zoning ordinance is the legal device to carry it out. The zoning ordinance divides the community into districts, or zones and regulates land use activity by specifying permitted uses of land and the intensity or density of such uses.

The study area currently includes 23 different zoning categories, with the majority being residential zonings including 5 different types of multi-family residential and 3 types of single family residential. Office uses make up approximately 32% of the zones with the bulk being office and institutional uses followed by office high rise (OHR) and office mid

rise (OMR) districts. There are 7 different types of commercial zones making up approximately 14% of the study area. These commercial areas can be found along Powers Ferry and Windy Hill road with most of the zoning designations being general commercial (GC) or neighborhood shopping (NS). **Figure 13** is a map that shows how these zoning districts layout across the study area and **Figure 14** breaks down each zoning district by acreage and percentage of study area.





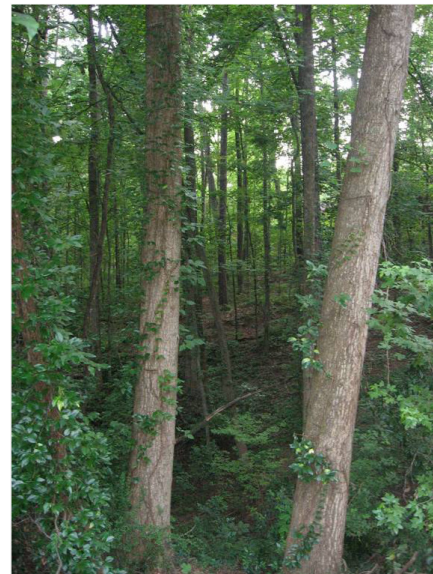
Use	Zoning	Acres	% Study Area
RES.	R-80 Single Family Detached	15	1.5%
	R-20 Single Family Detached	17	1.7%
	RA-5 Single Family Detached	8	0.8%
	SC	3	0.3%
	UC	29	2.9%
	FST-10 Townhomes, 10 UPA	3	0.3%
	RM-8 Multi-Family District, 8 UPA	50	5.0%
	RM-12 Multi-Family District, 12 UPA	301	29.8%
	RM-16 Multi-Family District, 16 UPA	85	8.4%
	RM-10T	13	1.3%
	RMR	6	0.6%
COM.	NRC	3	0.3%
	LRC	4	0.4%
	NS	37	3.7%
	GC	66	6.5%
	CRC	23	2.3%
	CF	2	0.2%
	PSC	7	0.7%
OFF.	O&I	239	23.7%
	OHR	83	8.2%
	OMR	5	0.5%
IND.	TS	7	0.7%
	LI	3	0.3%

Figure 14

### Parks & Open Space

Cobb County operates two park facilities within 1.5 miles of the study area. Terrell Mill Park, located at the junction of Terrell Mill, Paper Mill and Old Paper Mill road, is a 25 acre active park that includes Soccer and Softball fields, a playground, picnic tables and the Terrell Mill Tennis Center. The other Cobb park facility is a par 58 golf course located on the north side of Windy Hill Road just east of the city of Smyrna.

The National Park Service operates and maintains the Chattahoochee National Recreational Area (CNRA) which is a federally owned passive park with large trees, hiking trails and forest that offers recreation and access to the Chattahoochee River. It is one in a series of parklands along a 48 mile stretch of the Chattahoochee River signed into

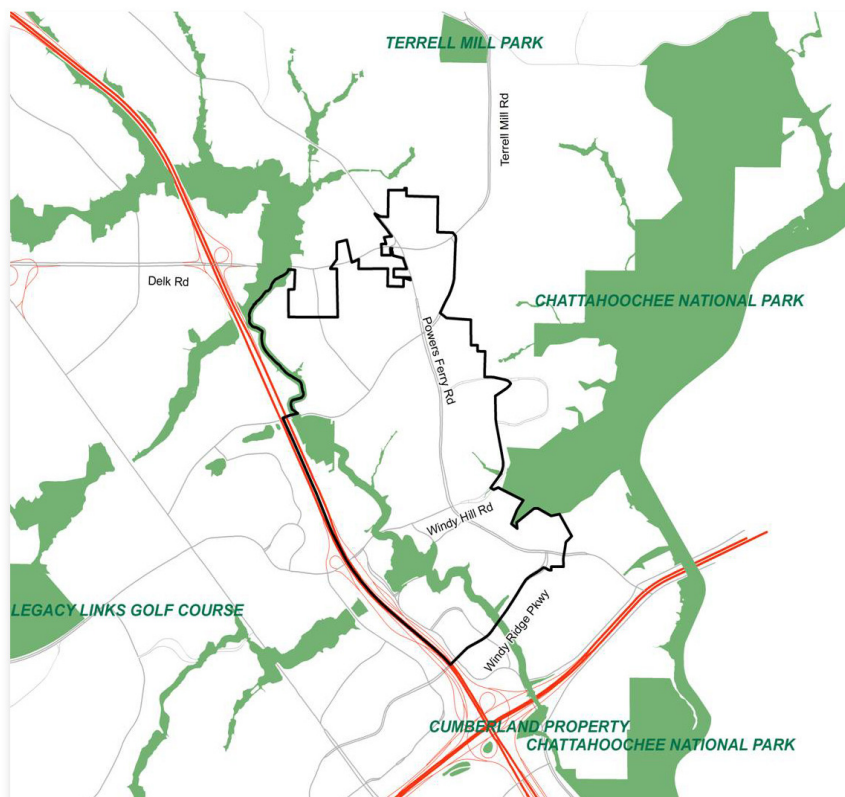




legislation in 1978. The CNRA offers access to the river

One of the more appealing recreational opportunities the CNRA offers are bike trails. The CNRA has the only approved mountain bike trail system in metro Atlanta. The system consists of two trails that are multi-purpose. The Cochran Shoals trail can be accessed at the Interstate North entrance and the Columns Drive entrance. The trail is 3 miles long with a flat, hard packed surface and designed for the recreational bike rider. The Sope Creek trail, which is rugged and steep in places and winds through the woods, was developed primarily for mountain bikes. The Sope Creek Trail can be accessed from the Sope Creek entrance into the CNRA.

There are two pockets of open space within the Powers Ferry study boundary totaling approximately 35 acres. One is a combination of 4 parcels equaling 18 acres owned by Cobb County adjacent to I-75 and Terrell Mill road and the other is a 17 acre privately owned natural area within the Interstate North Office Park. Rottenwood Creek with its associated floodplain and 50 foot undisturbed buffer offers linear open space through the study area and traverses the two 17 and 18 acre open space areas.



**Figure 15**

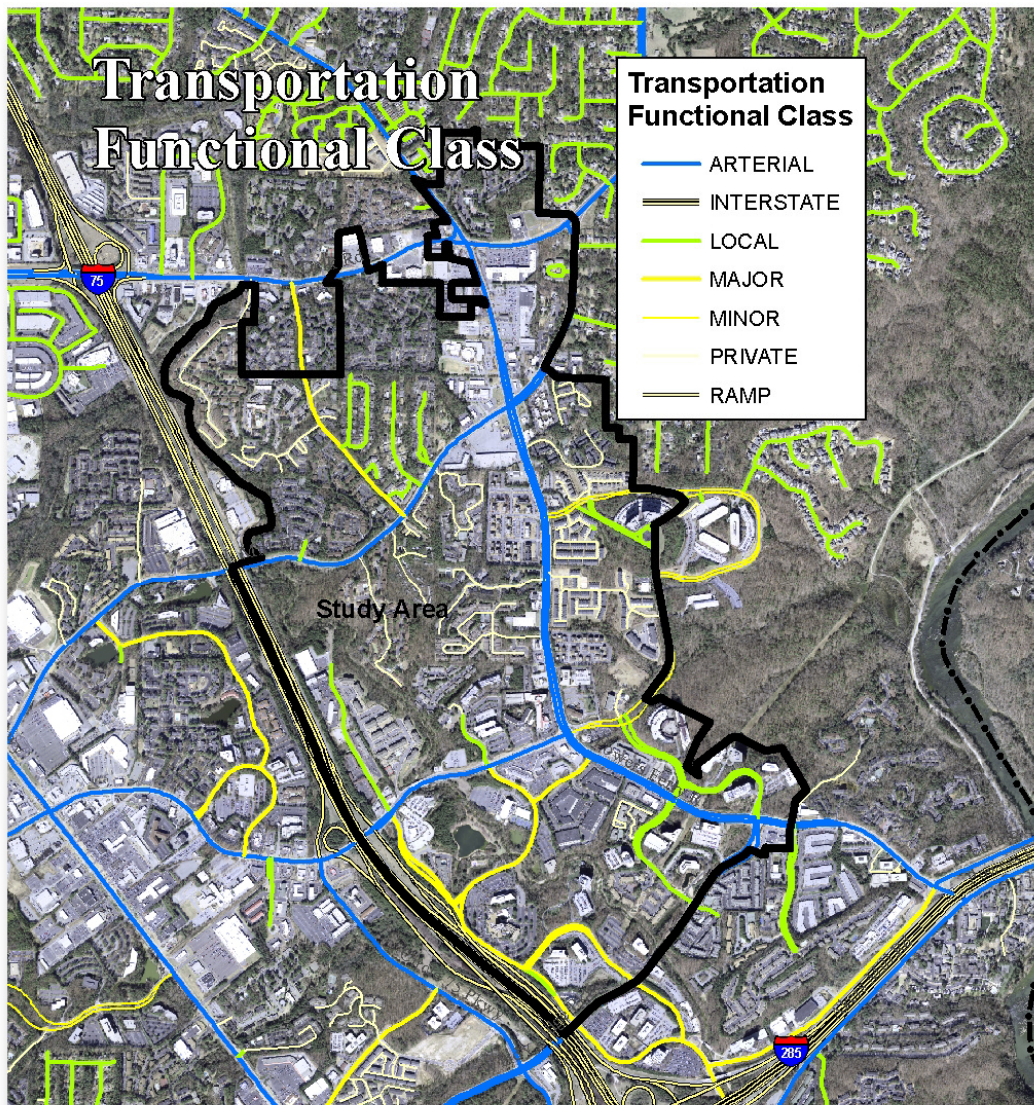
### **III.D Transportation**

#### Roadway Connectivity and Classifications

Powers Ferry Road is classified as an Arterial roadway by the Cobb County Department of Transportation and as an Urban Minor Collector Street by the Georgia Department of Transportation. Both classifications describe roadways that serve the primary purpose of carrying large volumes of vehicular traffic. It is a north-south roadway that connects Akers Mill Road to the south with South Marietta Parkway (SR 120) to the north.

The designated corridor within the study area extends between Delk Road and Windy Ridge Parkway. Powers Ferry Road consist of 4 to 5 lanes between Delk Road and Terrell Mill with a dual center turn lane that transforms to a raised concrete median at the Powers Ferry Road and Terrell Mill Road intersection. From Terrell Mill to Windy Ridge Parkway, Powers Ferry is a 6 lane median divided roadway with additional turn lanes at key intersections.

Powers Ferry Road is a key transportation corridor for moving vehicles north and south and providing the only alternate route east of Interstate 75. The study area has great east-west connectivity with Arterial roadways such as, Delk Road, Terrell Mill Road, Windy Hill Road and Windy Ridge Parkway, but lacks important north-south connectivity elements, which is the major traffic flow during peak travel times because of the residential uses in the north and the job centers to the south.



**Figure 16**

#### Traffic Counts and Level of Service (LOS)

There are five traffic count locations along Powers Ferry Road that were analyzed by the Department of Transportation. Three data counts were gathered along Terrell Mill Road, one along Delk Road and one along Windy Ridge Parkway. From these data points the following counts were observed.

#### **Powers Ferry Road**

North of Delk Road = 19,600

Delk Road to Terrell Mill = 24,800



Terrell Mill to Windy Hill Road = 39,800  
Windy Hill Road to Windy Ridge Parkway = 26,600  
South of Windy Ridge Parkway = 21,100

**Terrell Mill Road**

North of Delk Road = 43,900  
Delk Road to Powers Ferry Road = 27,600  
West of Powers Ferry = 17,700

**Delk Road**

Powers Ferry to Terrell Mill = 19,100

**Windy Ridge Parkway**

West of Parkwood Circle = 10,900

Counts through the study area suggest a traffic pattern that is consistent with AM/PM peak travel flow. Vehicular movement in the AM is along Terrell Mill to Powers Ferry and then along Powers Ferry to Windy Hill and from Windy Hill to Interstate 75 and just the opposite during the PM peak time.

Because of the high number of commuters traveling southbound during the AM peak hours and northbound during the PM peak hours, Powers Ferry Road has experienced some relatively low Level of Service (LOS) ratings over the last several years. The better LOS ratings (A, B, C) appear on the southern end of the corridor (at Windy Ridge Parkway), while the lower ratings (D, E, F) appear on the six-lane sections – in the northern end of the corridor (at Delk Road). Specifically, the biggest bottlenecks along the corridor are the approaches to Delk Road (LOS F), Terrell Mill Road (LOS E) and Shadowood Parkway (LOS D). A map depicting the count locations and LOS for Powers Ferry is shown in **Figure 17**.

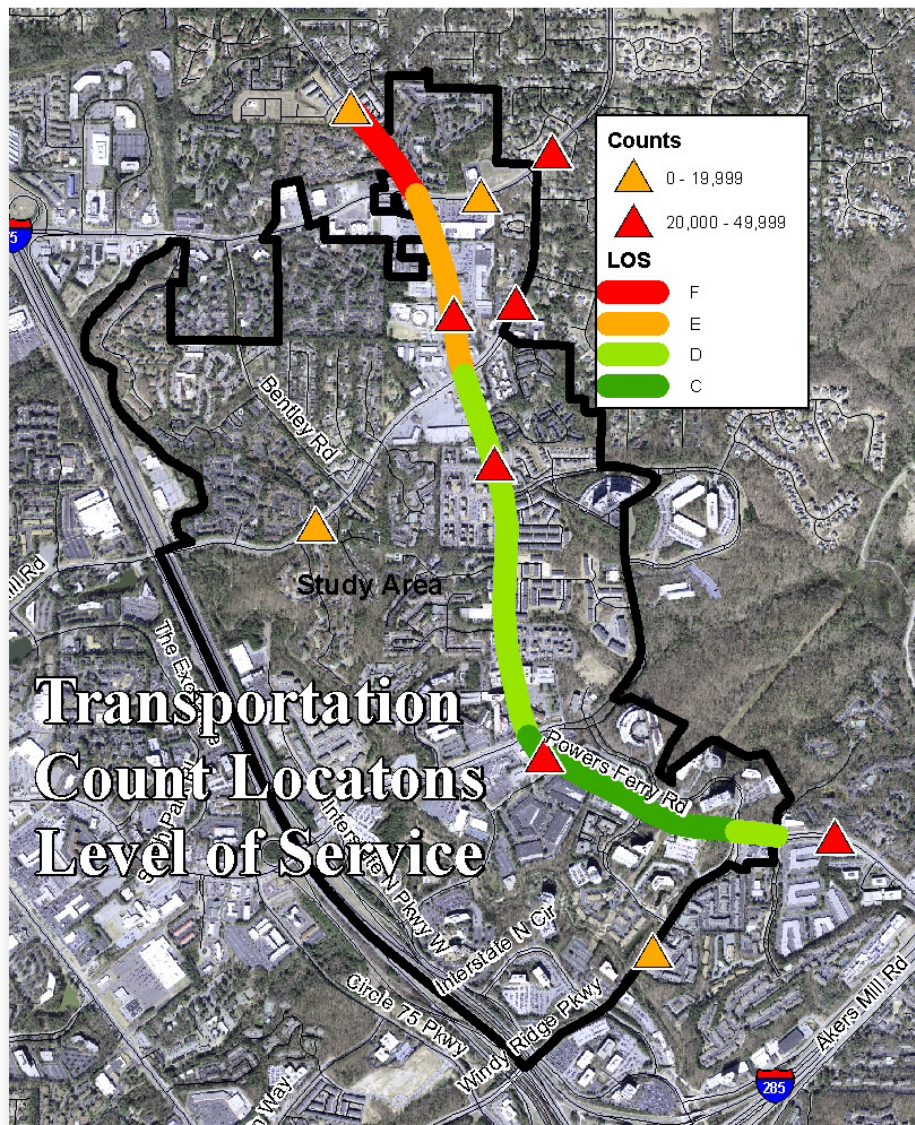


Figure 17

#### Accident Information

From June 2005 to May 2007, there were 344 vehicle crashes reported along the Powers Ferry Road corridor, resulting in 50 reported injuries. Much of the safety issues along the corridor can be contributed to the many curb cuts along the roadway, especially in the north part of the study area. The majority of the crashes occurred at the Powers Ferry Intersection with Delk Road and consisted primarily of rear end accidents. The accident reports do not distinguish accidents involving bicycle and/or pedestrians.

## Transit

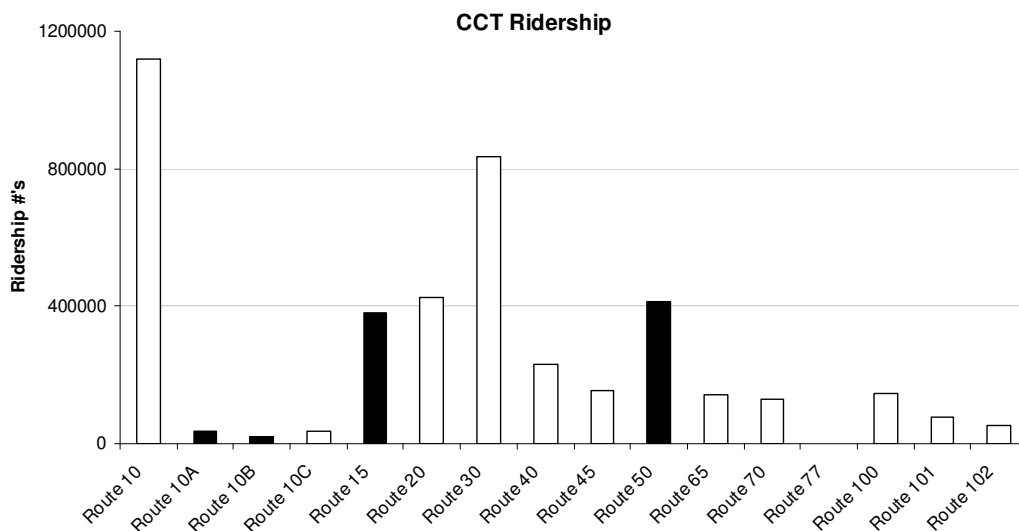
The corridor accommodates four different local fixed transit routes to provide convenient accessibility to other stops within the corridor, as well as, places like Marietta and Atlanta via the Cumberland Boulevard Transfer Station and MARTA. Routes 10A and 10B are unique in the fact that they only operate reverse peak-hour service for Routes 100 and 101. Below is a more detailed description of the transit routes servicing the Powers Ferry study area followed by **Figure 18** that shows a comparison of ridership numbers to other routes throughout the County (Powers Ferry serviced routes are highlighted in black).

Route 10A is a reverse peak-hour service of Route 100. It operates from Atlanta to Delk Road via the Cumberland Boulevard Transfer Center, Cobb Parkway (US 41), and Terrell Mill Road.

Route 10B is a reverse peak-hour service of Route 101. It operates from Atlanta to Windy Hill Road via the Cumberland Boulevard Transfer Center and Interstate North.

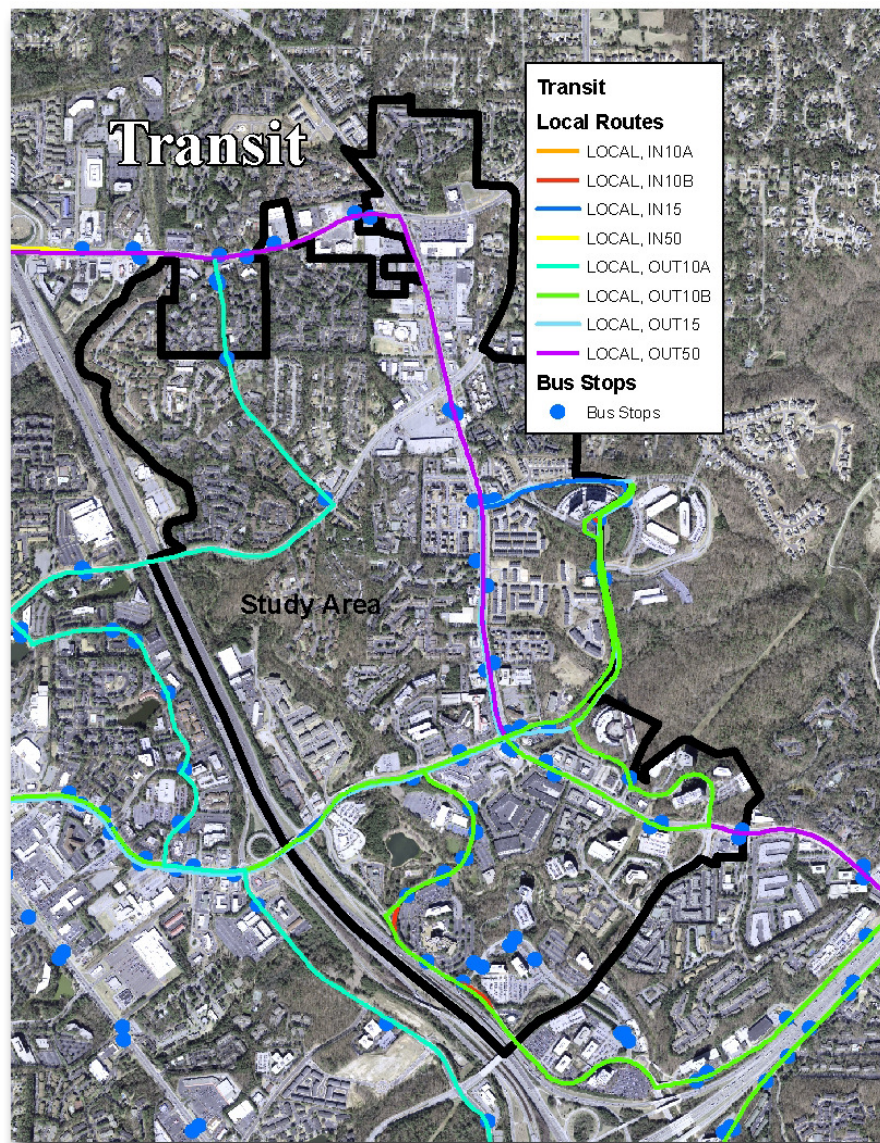
Route 15 operates from Marietta to Wildwood Office Park via County Services Parkway and Windy Hill Road.

Route 50 operates from Marietta to the Cumberland Boulevard Transfer Center via U.S. 41 and Powers Ferry Road. Route 50 also serves Overton Park and the Galleria area.



**Figure 18**





**Figure 19**

### Bike & Pedestrian Characteristics

The corridor consists of sidewalks along both sides of the roadway, with a few gaps in between due to needed improvements and property issues. There are connecting sidewalks from the three major intersections, inside the study area. There are sidewalks that connect exclusively to the Wildwood Office Park, through Wildwood Parkway. There still remains sections of sidewalks along Powers Ferry that are less than the standard 5 foot minimum, especially along the west side of Powers Ferry Road.

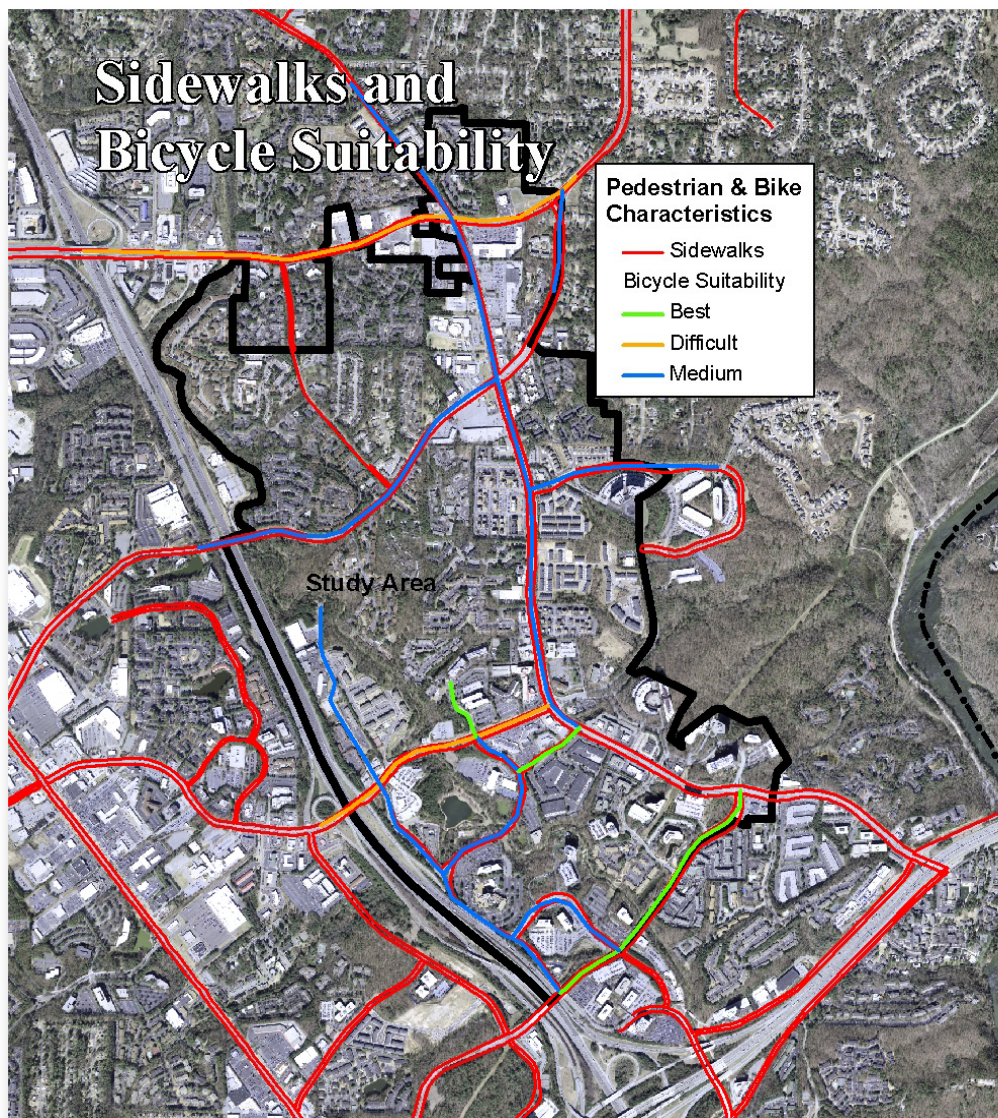


Several of the other roadways within the study area have sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. These roadways include Delk Road, Terrell Mill Road, Windy Hill Road, Windy Ridge Parkway and Interstate North Parkway. Other Roadways such as Bentley Road and Interstate North Circle have sidewalks on at least one side of the roadway and/or gaps. Leland Drive has no sidewalks on either side of the roadway.

Crosswalks are evident at key intersections with Powers Ferry. However, some still lack full safe pedestrian mobility at all four corners of the intersection. The Delk Road intersection offers three pedestrian signals and two crosswalks and the Terrell Mill and Wildwood Parkway intersections contain four pedestrian signals and three crosswalks. Further south, within the CID, all key intersections are adequate for pedestrian safety with room for improvement.

Other than the trail network throughout the Chattahoochee Recreational Area, the Rottenwood Creek Trail up to Interstate North Parkway is the only existing trail in the area. According to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan an extension of this trail is programmed along the creek northward to Terrell Mill.

According to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan and the Bicycle Suitability map also shown in (**Figure 20**), Delk Road and Windy Hill Road provide the most difficult conditions for bicycling. However, Powers Ferry, Terrell Mill and a host of other minor collectors provide medium to best conditions for Bicycling.



**Figure 20**

### Improvement Projects

There are several planned improvement projects that will impact the Powers Ferry Road corridor. Among them is, the Powers Ferry Road corridor improvements. Funded primarily by the 2005 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), this project will consist of constructing an additional westbound lane on Windy Hill Road, to Powers Ferry Road; and constructing an additional northbound lane on Powers Ferry Road, from Wildwood Parkway to Terrell Mill Road. The corridor improvements should ease the north-south traffic movements along the Powers Ferry Road corridor. The projects are programmed for construction in late 2009.

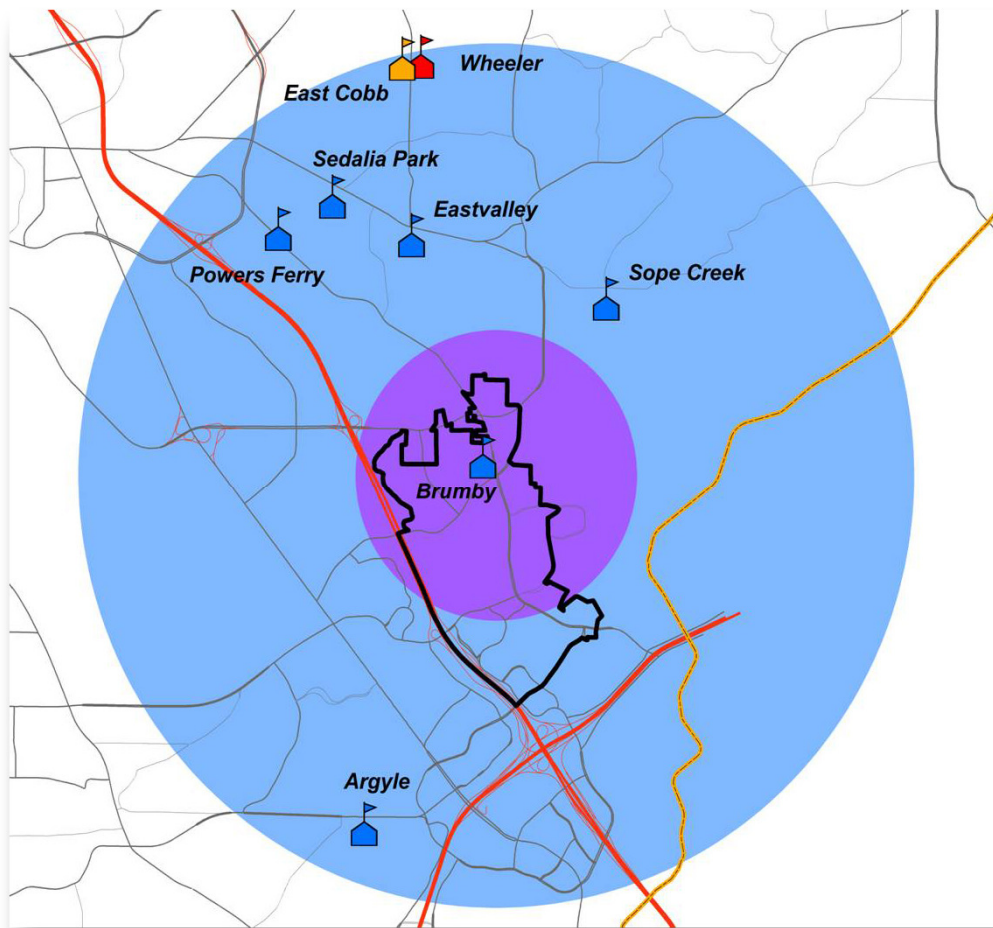
Among other projects slated for Powers Ferry Road and vicinity are roadway capacity improvements along the featured corridor. There are plans, pending the availability of funding, to improve roadway capacity between Little Road and Terrell Mill Road. In addition, there are plans to extend Leland Drive, between Windy Hill Road and Terrell Mill Road.

### **III.E Community Facilities**

For the purpose of this study community facilities are defined as uses established primarily for the benefit and services of the residents and businesses of the general area. They include public schools, fire stations, health and human service facilities and other public facilities. The general area for our community facility research is an established 3 mile radius from the intersection of Terrell Mill road and Powers Ferry road.

There are 6 elementary schools within the scope of our facilities analysis. Brumby Elementary, which was built to serve 200 students in 1965, is the only school within the designated Powers Ferry planning boundary. Since Brumby Elementary opened its doors in 1965 the school has had two additions in 1970 and then again in 1997 due to enrollment exceeding building capacity. Currently the school serves a population of 871 regular and special needs children from kindergarten to fifth grade. According to the Brumby Elementary School Improvement Plan the mobility rate for the 2007-2008 school year was 56.3% which compared to the county is high. This is due in large part to a high percentage of apartments, extended stay hotels/motels and other rental dwellings within the Brumby attendance zone. Brumby Elementary includes 9 portable classrooms and sits on 9.5 acres adjacent to Powers Ferry Road. Brumby feeds to East Cobb Middle School which subsequently feeds into Wheeler High School, which is at the outer limits of our analysis zone.





**Figure 21**

Cobb County Public Safety operates 2 Fire Stations within 2 miles of each other. Station 19 located on Powers Ferry Road just south of Terrell Mill contains 1 Engine and 1 truck complete with Aerial Ladder, while Station 3, located outside of the designated corridor study area on Terrell Mill Road adjacent to Terrell Mill Park, contains 1 Engine and 1 Air truck.

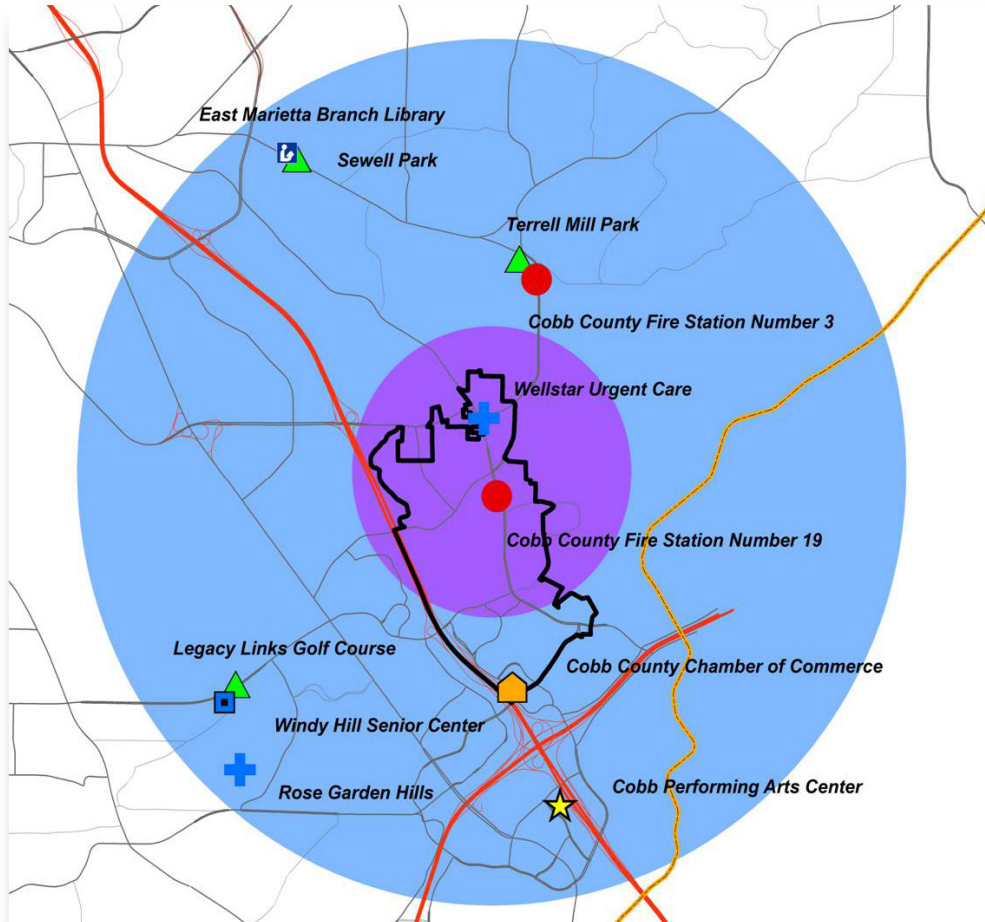
Further north along the perimeter of the established 3 mile analysis zone is the only Library in this area of the county. The East Marietta Branch Library, which services residents of east Marietta and east Cobb, is an 8,600 sf., 2-story building, currently out of compliance with ADA standards due to lack of elevator. The library, which was built in 1967, has a collection size of 60,021 volumes and average monthly circulation around 18,000, which is an increase of 11% over 2008, ranking it 7<sup>th</sup> in the library system. There are 14 public computers at the East Marietta Branch which ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in computer usage and an average monthly attendance for children's activities of 350.



Health services in the community are both public and private facilities. Rose Garden Hills is a public health facility providing all Cobb and Douglas county residents personal health services with fees based on income. The other two health facilities are privately owned, one with 115 licensed beds located on Windy Hill Road between I-75 and Cobb Parkway and the other being an outpatient only urgent care center within the study boundary on the southeast corner of Delk Road and Powers Ferry Road.

The Windy Hill Multipurpose Senior Center is a 16,000 sf. facility on 11 acres at the intersection of Windy Hill Road and Roswell Street in Smyrna. The center consists of multipurpose rooms, meeting rooms and a branch of the Cobb County Library system all for the convenience of the seniors.

Two other unique facilities offering benefits to the general community is the Cobb County Chamber of Commerce, which promotes the community by providing opportunities to Cobb's businesses and industries and is located on Interstate North Parkway near Windy Ridge Parkway. The Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre provides regional and national entertainment services for the community and beyond. The performing arts center is a venue for Broadway shows, ballet, concerts, educational shows, family performances, opera and corporate meetings and events. It is also the home theatre for the Atlanta Opera and the Atlanta Ballet. The center is located outside of the Powers Ferry study area but within the 3 mile analysis zone at the corner of Akers Mill Road and Cobb Galleria Parkway.

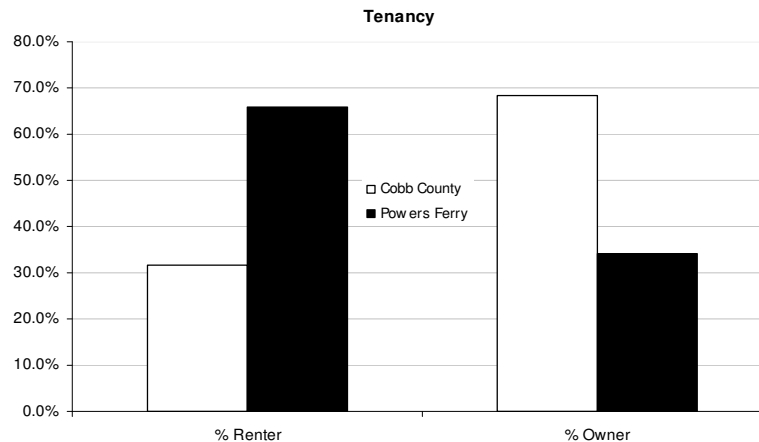


**Figure 22**

### **III.F Housing**

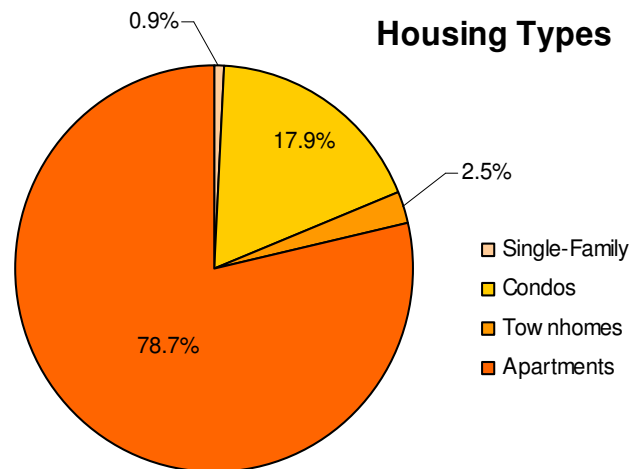
Housing, like most other communities, dominates the Powers Ferry study area and out lying districts. According to the Census Bureau, as of 2000 there were over 18,000 housing units within the 5 census tracts that overlap the study boundary. Upon closer examination, about 5,750 of the units are within the study boundary.

Tenure for all occupied housing units within census tracts 303.2, 303.38, 304.02, 304.05 and 304.06 were analyzed and compared to Cobb County as a whole. **Figure 23** reinforces what was often heard during the public meetings, tenancy is unbalanced through out the Powers Ferry corridor. When compared to the County occupancy within the study area is almost the exact opposite. Approximately 66% of the occupied housing units within the Powers Ferry study area are renter occupied, where as Cobb has 32% renter occupied housing. Owner Occupied units make up 68% of Cobb's housing units, while only 34% exist in the Powers Ferry area.



**Figure 23**

Analyzing housing types within the study area reveals one of the reasons why rental units are so common throughout the corridor. **Figure 24** breaks down the units by type of development and shows the use breakdown of this area, which is typical of urban environments. Apartments by far comprise the majority of units with almost 80%. Condominiums make up approximately 18% of the units followed by Townhomes. Single-family detached or attached dwellings, which is the major housing type for Cobb County, only makes up about 1% of the units within the Powers Ferry study area.



**Figure 24**

**Figures 25 & 26** reveal a notable difference between owner occupied and renter occupied units. **Figure 25** shows most of the owner occupied units exists east of Powers



Ferry near the Chattahoochee River and into East Cobb, while rental occupied units make up the preponderance of the dwelling units west of Powers Ferry along Interstate 75. This is indicative of the disconnected uses that currently exist in the region with apartments west of Powers Ferry and single-family residential east of Powers Ferry.

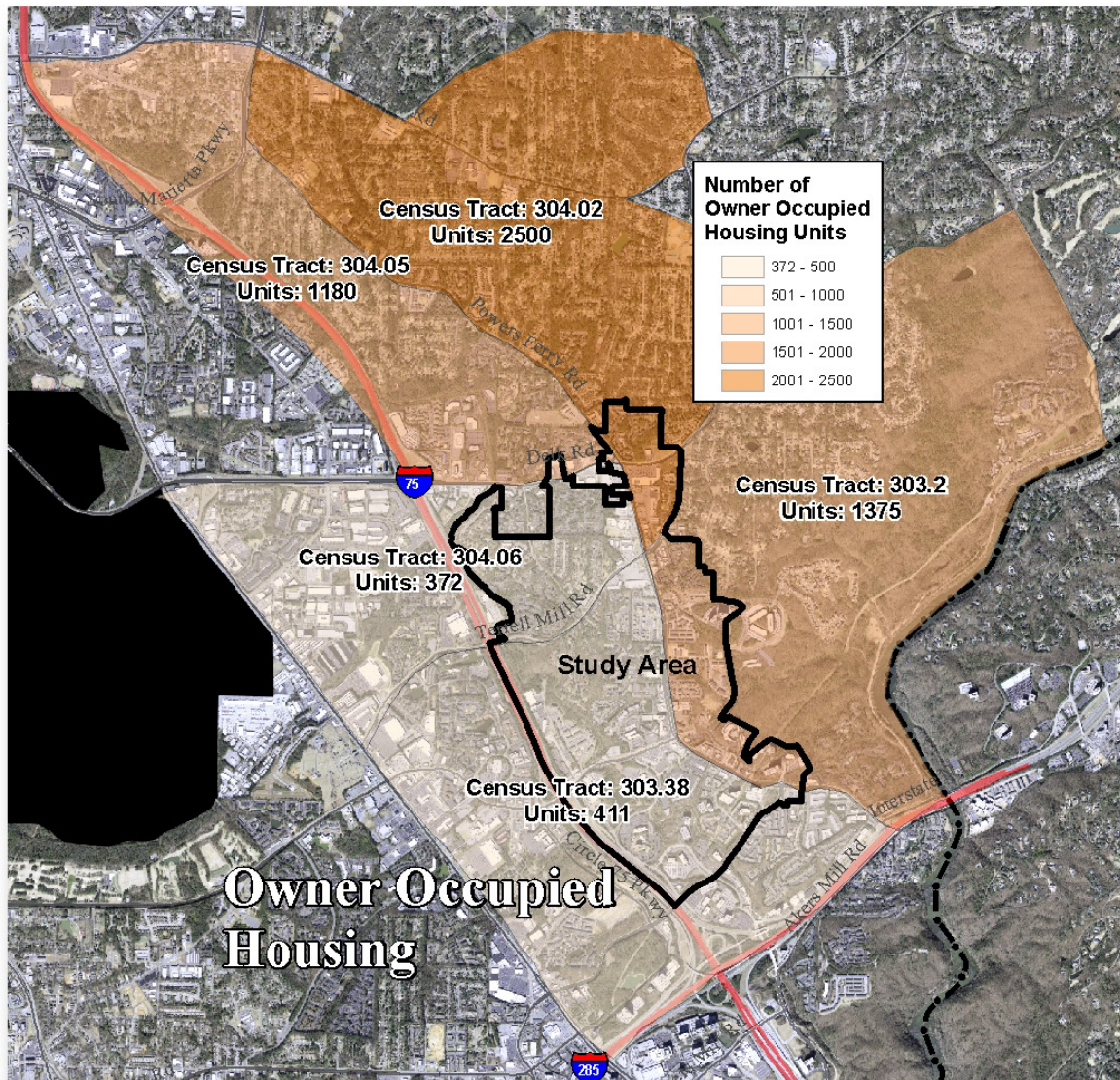


Figure 25



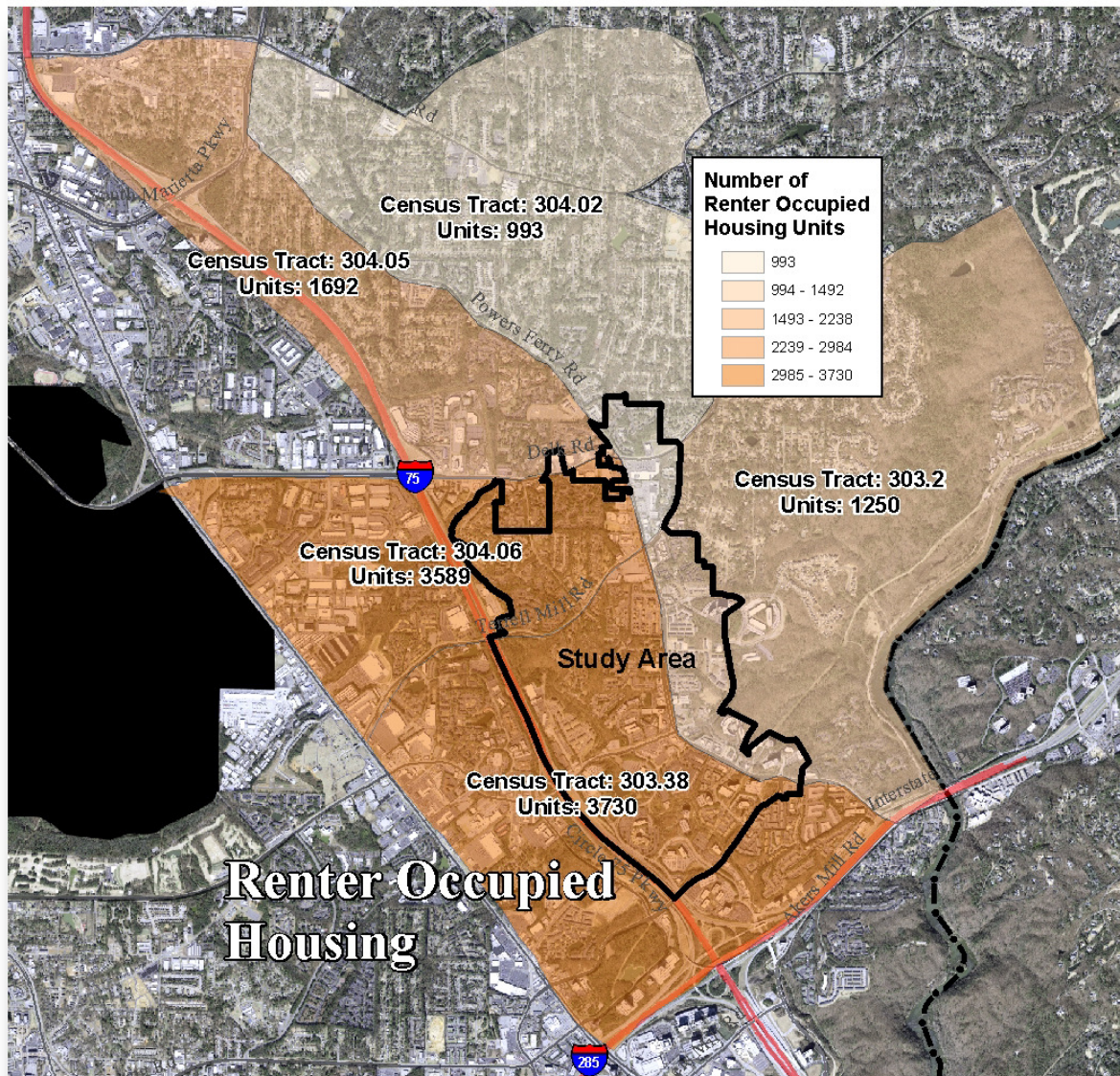


Figure 26

To understand the current new housing market, research was conducted within and adjacent to the study boundary utilizing Metrostudy, a housing market research firm.

As of early 2009, the entire market area, which was set up to follow the study boundary, consisted of only 2 for sale units resulting in a 1 month supply of new housing for the designated Powers Ferry corridor. The 2 units are part of a for sale only three story brick townhome development called Riverwalk at Wildwood which started construction in late 2004. Most of the units are built and occupied however the vacant developed lot supply is 9.4 months for the subdivision due to 18 lots ready for construction. The low month supply is evidence that sales for the 145 unit Wildwood community are going well even

in a down market. In fact, field research shows since early 2009 that construction has commenced on the remaining 18 vacant developed lots located within the Riverwalk at Wildwood subdivision.

Adjacent to the designated study area are two other active residential developments. The Oaks at Powers Ferry, which is north of Delk Road on the west side of Powers Ferry, was originally a rundown 183 unit apartment complex that is currently undergoing a transformation to a 158 unit townhome style condominium community complete with a mandatory Homeowners Association and Covenants with strict architectural control and limits to the total



number of “for sale” homes that can be leased thereafter. The other active subdivision is River’s Call, which is a single-family, detached, residential development, constructed in phases and at two different zonings (R-15 and RA-5) with an overall approximate density of 1.7 units per acre. The combined 104 unit subdivision has been active on the market since the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2000 and lacks closing on all lots except for 22 properties, 3 of which are for sale homes and the other 19 are vacant developed lots.

Wildwood Condominiums Horizon, inside the Wildwood Office Park, is another development that is currently active in the market. Better known as Horizon, it is a 17 story tower that opened in March of 2007. The luxury condo has 274 one and two bedroom homes, including several signature homes and penthouses ranging from the \$190’s to the \$420’s.

There is only one approved development in the study area that has not commenced land disturbance activity. The site is located on the southeasterly side of Wildwood Parkway, just south of Rivers Call Boulevard within the Wildwood Business Park. The residential development was approved in 2006 (Z-139) for a mix of attached, detached and urban condominium units.

### **III.G Crime**

The Powers Ferry corridor traverses through Police precinct 3, which serves southeast Cobb County and the Cumberland Galleria area and Police precinct 4, which serves most of east Cobb County. The central and southern part of the study area is serviced by Beat 319 and 318 of precinct 3 respectively, while the northern 1/3 is served by Beat 416 and 417 of precinct 4 (**Figure 27**).



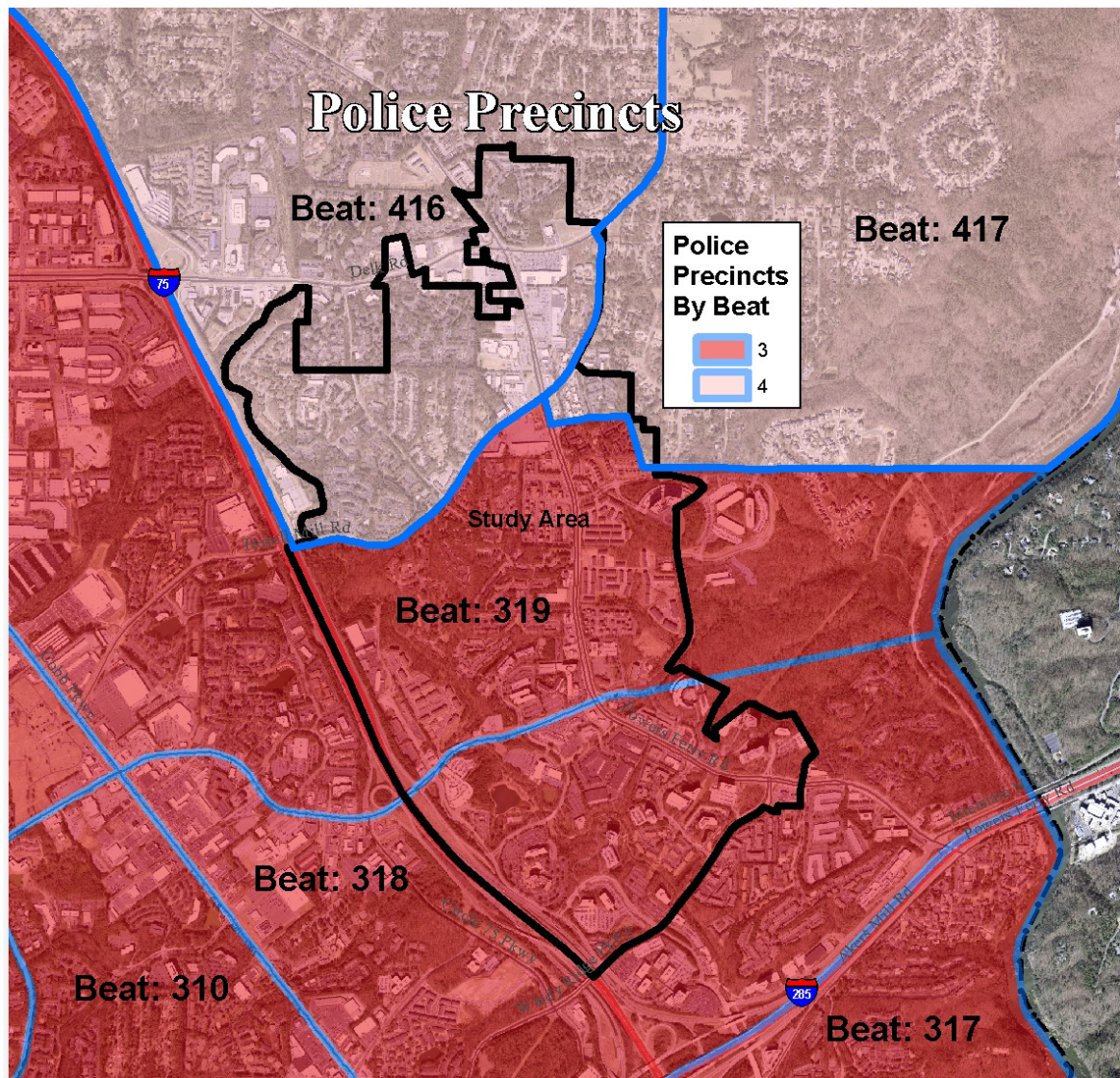
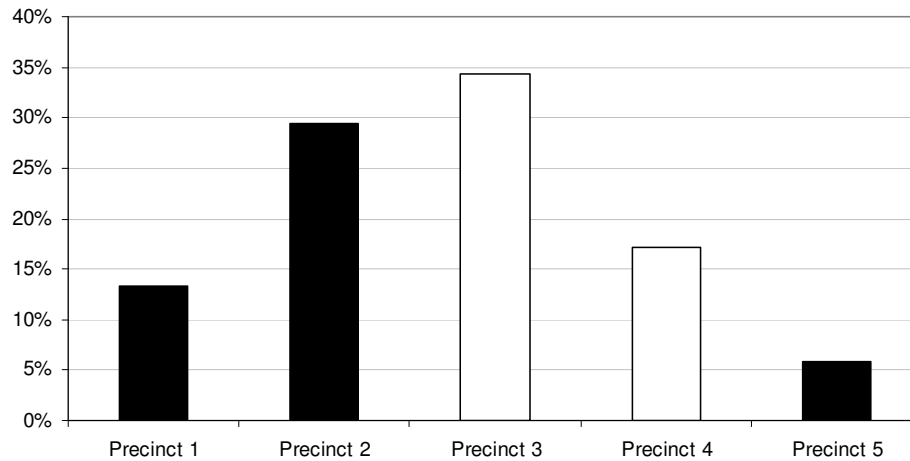


Figure 27

**Figure 28** compares reporting crimes for all 5 precincts from January 2009 to June 2009 per the Cobb County PENS program website. Precincts that patrol the Powers Ferry area are highlighted in white. Precinct 3 which covers the most densely populated region of the county has the highest percentage of crime at 35%, where as Precinct 4, which is mostly residential, is around 17%. The majority of crimes reported for all precincts were entering auto and residential burglary.

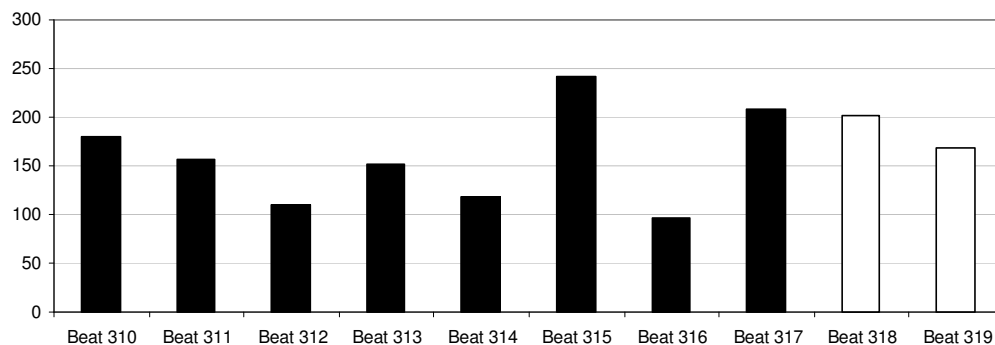
**Percentage of Reporting Crimes**  
source: <http://police.cobbcountyga.gov/>



**Figure 28**

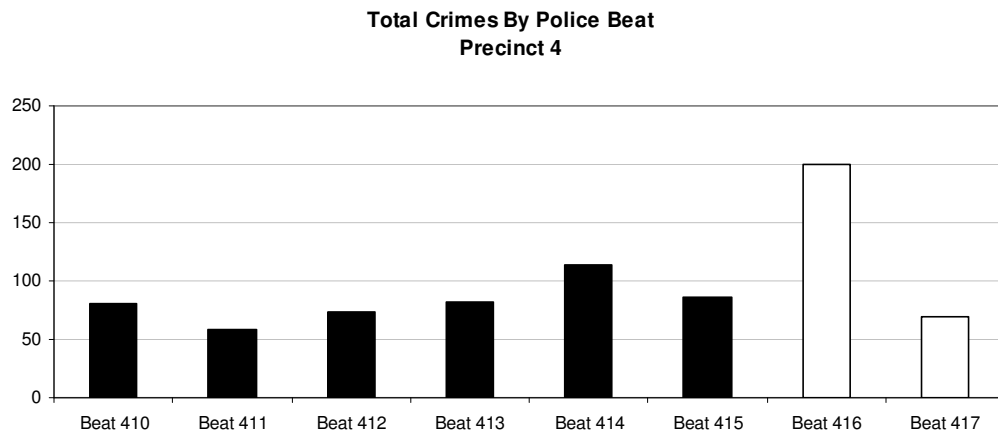
Taking the crime analysis further the Planning Division also analyzed reported crimes per Beat for precincts 3 and 4. Considering **Figure 29 & 30**, which shows study area serviced Beats highlighted in white, both Beat 318 of precinct 3 and 416 of precinct 4 reported around 200 crimes from November 2008 to June 2009 most being entering auto and residential burglary. Beat 318 is above average for all beats within precinct 3 and Beat 416 is significantly higher than the rest of the beats within precinct 4.

**Total Crimes By Police Beat**  
**Precinct 3**



**Figure 29**





**Figure 30**